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MARTLET

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Kiteboarding

Victoria's new hot sport

page eleven

NIC HUME PHOTO

Privacy groups worried about Patriot Act

Personal information of B.C. residents potentially at stake in outsourcing

by Mike Berry

By the end of August the provincial government will finalize its decision to contract out selected components of the Medical Services Plan and Pharmacare to Maximus Inc., an American corporation.

Much debate has been created as to whether the decision will make available the personal and private information of British Columbians to American law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, under the USA Patriot Act.

The Patriot Act, passed in the wake of the September 11 attacks, greatly expands the power of law enforcement, allowing, among other things, government agencies to force the release of medical information, library records, and even bookstore purchases.

Entire databases involving thousands of individuals can be sought whether they are under suspicion of illegal activity or not. There is no way to challenge the process of intelligence gathering and noncompliance could result in prosecution.

According to a letter from the province to B.C. Privacy Commissioner David Loukidelis, American authorities would follow existing treaties before enforcing the Patriot Act. But the government does believe there is a minimal risk that the United States could reach around these channels.

"It is not acceptable for our sovereignty to be at risk," said Joyce Murray, minister of public affairs. "We are planning tough new measures in our law that says you may not obtain info [via] the Patriot Act."

The government has decided to build particular measures into the contract with Maximus that would prohibit any breaches. It includes restricting access of info to U.S. affiliates of Canadian and B.C. service providers, as well as their own penalties and incentives to prevent disclosure.

British Columbia has one of the most stringent privacy laws in Canada. Regardless, some privacy groups are worried.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association alleges the provincial government is simply making "educated guesses" as to the reach of the Patriot Act.

Policy Director Michael Vonn believes the government is going about this "willy-nilly" and practically "praying to God" that its measures will work.

"There is contradictory opinion that B.C.'s law would win out," she said. She claimed that the majority of opinion is so far opposed to the contract.

According to Maximus' statement to the privacy commissioner, "outsourcing providers will have 'custody' of personal information of British Columbians, but they will not have 'control.'"

It also states that there is "no linkages across the border that would facilitate or permit the transfer or exchange of personal information in an electronic or manual manner." There is the potential, it says, for U.S. authorities to access B.C. information, but says the existing channels take precedence.

In February 2004, the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union filed an application for a judicial review of the government's outsourcing decision. Critics are asking why the government must make its decision by the end of the month instead of waiting for the outcome of the review.

Regardless, Murray said that stopping outsourcing does not deal with the issues surrounding the Patriot Act.

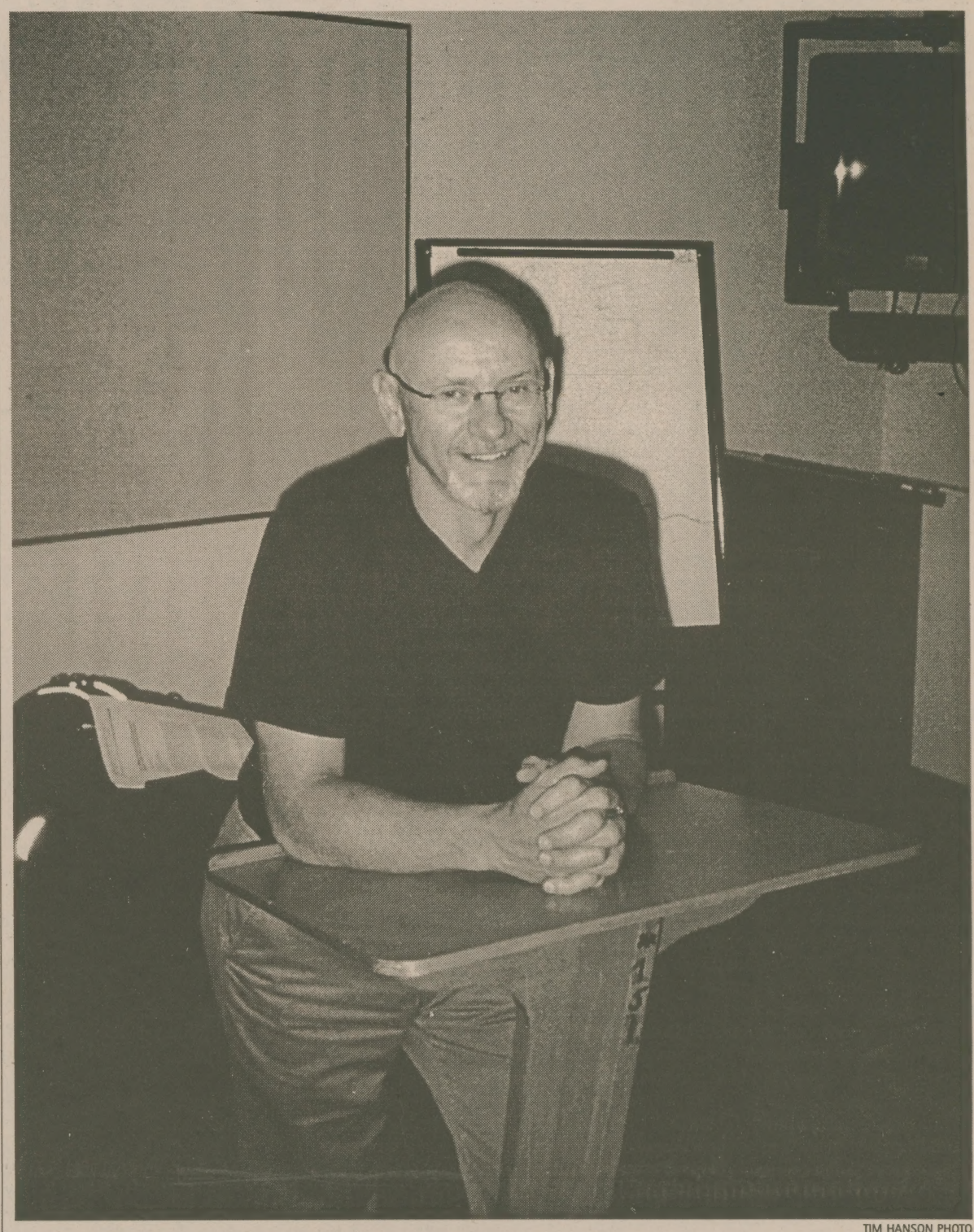
"There are no guarantees in this day and age to stop info from getting passed," she explained.

Darrell Evans, executive director of the B.C. Freedom of Information and Privacy Association, added that without a guarantee, the personal information of the province's residents is in jeopardy.

"In order to fight terrorism effectively, what we really need is better policing, not surveillance of the whole population," said Evans. "As events have shown, there is a real lack of intelligence in the 'intelligence' capabilities of the CIA and FBI, and a terrific lack of insight in the current U.S. administration. This will not be remedied by creating a 'Big Brother' surveillance system or a police state... The result is a diminution of our civil liberties and a big setback for democracy."

"There is much temptation to use these tools for things for which they weren't intended," added Vonn. When provisions are expanded concerning national security, she said, secrecy booms. Ultimately we lose our ability to maintain and oversee these provisions.

Recently, the Patriot Act was used to catch and prosecute marijuana smugglers in Washington State, including some from B.C.



TIM HANSON PHOTO

James Garbarino says that a more "ecological" approach is needed in dealing with difficult youth.

Psychologist warns of 'social toxicity'

by Tim Hanson

A leading authority on child development and youth violence blames "social toxicity" for putting youth at risk.

James Garbarino has served as an expert witness in several court cases involving youth violence in America, most prominently as psychological "coroner" to Dylan Clebold, one of the two boys responsible for the Columbine High School shootings.

Garbarino told listeners at UVic last month that the social environment of the child can be poisoned, referring to this idea as "social toxicity." While examining many topics such as bullying, harassment, and social violence, Garbarino paid special attention to the hypersexualization of girls, delusions about the value of consumerism, televised violence and violent video games.

"One hundred years ago, youth were concerned with their character. Questions not uncommon were: 'Am I a good daughter? Am I a good Christian?' Now girl's diaries are filled with: 'Are my lips too small? Are my thighs too big? Are my thighs too fat? Do I look like Britney Spears?'" he said. Garbarino insists we have become a superficial culture obsessed with appearances, possessions, instant gratification and consumption towards those ends.

In terms of violence, Garbarino said that televised violence and video games effectively remove inhibitions against killing.

"This psychological desensitization to violence and killing from television and video games is the same training that soldiers receive from the American Armed Forces," he explained.

Desensitization has troubling ramifications. The American Journal of Public Health reported last January that America is experiencing high incidence of violence among youth and increasing spousal abuse at the hands of its military personnel.

Addressing all of these issues can be difficult but not impossible. Garbarino pointed towards the involvement of the community, strong, authoritative leadership in parenting, spiritual involvement and an emphasis on empathy and equality as solutions to the increasing difficulties of parenting.

Garbarino emphasized that in dealing with issues of risk and development, parents and society seem to be too reductionistic when faced with difficulty and need to bring a more "ecological" approach to the situation.

The ecological approach involves considering the context of behaviour and the perspective of the child before adopting overly simplistic solutions.

"There is rarely a cause-effect relationship that applies across all categories," he explained. "Most often when we ask if certain causes affect behaviour the response is: it depends." Garbarino took pains to illustrate that poor temperament in children does not necessarily guarantee violent outburst in teenage years.

Risk factors such as the absence of a parent, living in poverty, parent's drug addictions, rigid punitive parenting styles, and racism exposure contribute to the temperament of children.

But Garbarino also pointed out that these risk factors are not wholly determinant of a child's disposition.

"Life doesn't have to be free of risk factors for good development," he said. "Human beings are not wimps, we are robust and resilient within limits."

According to Garbarino, there are 40 assets which can aid the temperament and development of a child, among them love and support from their family, beliefs of the child, interest in the child from at least three people outside of the immediate family, and diverse cultural interests.

Garbarino, a professor of Human Development at Cornell University, has authored such books as *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* and *Raising Children in a Socially Toxic Environment.*

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International students one step closer to power

by Stephen Thomson

BURNABY, B.C. (CUP) — International students are one step closer to being able to take part in the highest level of decision making in British Columbia.

In order to make this possible, the University Presidents' Council, which represents five public universities, including Simon Fraser University, wants to amend the province's University Act.

Currently, the Act does not allow international students to stand for election to a university's board of governors. But in a move towards eventually changing this, SFU's board voted July 22 to support the Presidents' Council's plan to lobby the provincial government to amend the law.

John Waterhouse, SFU's vice president of academics, said that the board acted in response to concerns raised by university's senate and student union that it is "not just or equitable to preclude international students from the board of governors."

Chris Giacomantonio, one of two student representatives on the board, expressed unequivocal support for the decision.

"I think it's relatively simple. International students are students at the university; it's their community as much as anyone else's," he said.

Shawn Hunsdale, the other student representative, agreed.

"Basically, the university is becoming increasingly dependent on international students as part of their revenue," he said. "So, I think that it's important that these students be represented more within the running of the university."

For Clement Apaak, who has been studying at SFU since 2001, representation on the board is not the only pressing issue for international students such as himself. Higher fees than domestic students and restrictions from working off-campus are also of concern.

"The fact is that the board of governors is the highest decision-making body when it comes to issues pertaining to how much it's going to cost you for your education," Apaak said over the phone from San Diego. "Therefore, it is only appropriate that we should be able to be part of the body that determines how much we pay."

Besides being an outspoken advocate for international students, Apaak has attempted to run for SFU's board three times. On each occasion, he had to withdraw his candidacy because of the University Act. But, with the backing of groups such as the Presidents' Council, as well as SFU's board of governors, senate and student union, not to mention many politicians, Apaak is confident he will see a fourth run for the board through to voting.

"In a nutshell, we have the support of all the major players when it comes to what it takes to change the University Act."

A genderless john

UVic residential buildings feature gender-neutral washrooms

by Megan Stewart

More than 400 students moving the three new UVic residences this fall will have access to a single-stall washroom—a space that is essentially gender-inclusive and gender-neutral.

Gender-neutral and gender-inclusive johns eliminate the need for people to identify themselves as either male or female, since doors either feature both pictograms or simply read "washroom."

"The general purpose is human space," said Liisa Gibson, residence life coordinator for Housing, Food and Conference Services. "There are times when it becomes political and personal about where you go, but other times the label doesn't get to decide when you need to use a bathroom."

Speaking under anonymity as a transgendered student at UVic, Kendall says he is not comfortable in and does not feel safe entering any space segregated by sex. He said the new washrooms are fantastic.

"Because I identify as bi-gendered, I present sometimes as unambiguously male, sometimes as female, but often quite androgynously. When I'm in androgynous mode, I get looked at askance no matter which bathroom I go into."

As a female-to-other, or femme FTM (female-to-male), Kendall says urinals regularly give away his biological makeup and could compromise his safety. "It kind of gives you away when you go into a stall and sit down to pee. For FTM's who don't pass [as male], for instance, there is a real risk of physical violence in the men's room."

A transgendered student at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Vancouver has been calling for a gender-neutral washroom in the student centre since last fall. Louis Julig, a member of the so-called bathroom committee, told the university's student paper, the *Peak*, that gender-neutral washrooms should be available as a basic human right since they provide a safe, discrimination-free place for any inter-sexed, transgendered or gender-queer person.

"Gendering spaces excludes people," said Julig, a former member of the SFU student union executive. "I know that when I go to use a washroom on campus that's gendered, it's a serious inconvenience in my day and it's very stressful."

While the majority may not relate to their personal strife, many would agree with Kendall and Julig that washrooms segregated along "standard" gender norms marginalise those who challenge the accepted definitions of gender and sexuality, both which tend to look at men and women as binary opposites.

The bathroom-committee at SFU aspires to include gender-neutral washrooms on every floor of every building on the Burnaby campus. So far, one co-ed dorm houses a gender-inclusive facility.

Student administrations at universities across Canada, including UVic, SFU, McGill and Concordia, have grappled with the issue of designating at least one washroom in student centres as gender-neutral.

Joanna Groves, UVSS Board of Directors chairperson, said the Canadian Federation of Students has broached the subject of gender-neutral washrooms and the UVSS has considered changing facilities in the SUB.

"The easiest way to [make changes] would be to designate a single-stall washroom and just say that it's a washroom, not have it be either male or female," said Groves. "The first step is just having a safe place where there is no stigma attached to using the washroom. It can't be labelled as a transgendered washroom or the people using it would be outed."

Kendall is backed by the university's equity and human rights office. Becky Cory, who works with the office and sits with the committee on sexual and gender diversity said, "[The washrooms in residence] are a move in the right direction. It's important to meet the needs of all students."

Two silhouettes—one skirted, one panted—will mark the doors to the single-stall washrooms in residence.

But with the pictograms still prominent on the door, how gender-neutral are the washrooms?

"If it's a washroom that's open to everybody, then it should just say washroom," said Stacia Stewart, the diversity coordinator at Egale, a national organization concerned with equity and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual people, and their families.

"I've always been irritated by the little drawings. My instinct would be to say no, [the new facilities] are not gender-neutral washrooms."

Gavin Quiney, general manager of Housing, Food and Conference Services at UVic, doesn't have any qualms about the pictograms.

The choice to install gender-neutral washrooms came down to three issues, Quiney said, and despite none of them relating to a student's gender or sexuality in his point of view, the results are exactly what Kendall and the SFU bathroom committee are looking for.

Quiney said the single-stall washrooms—some with a toilet and sink, others with shower stalls—will provide the flexibility to house a variety of residents on a single floor (regardless of gender or sexual orientation), will ensure individual privacy, and will increase a person's security and safety.

"If you just want to brush your teeth, you can pop in to use the sink without commandeering the shower as well," said Quiney. "In terms of gender-neutral? It sounds politically correct that's for sure, maybe a little pompous. I'd say it's a washroom and men and women can use it."

Kendall admits the labels aren't ideal, but the message is right on.

"The man/woman symbol sadly reinforces the gender binary, but in practical terms, I think it makes it clear that the space is open to everyone. Of course, for me to feel really welcomed in a washroom, there would have to be a figure wearing both a tux and four inch heels on the door."

SEAN PATRICK SULLIVAN PHOTO

While the washrooms are a good first step, critics argue that having male/female pictograms on the door limits its inclusiveness.

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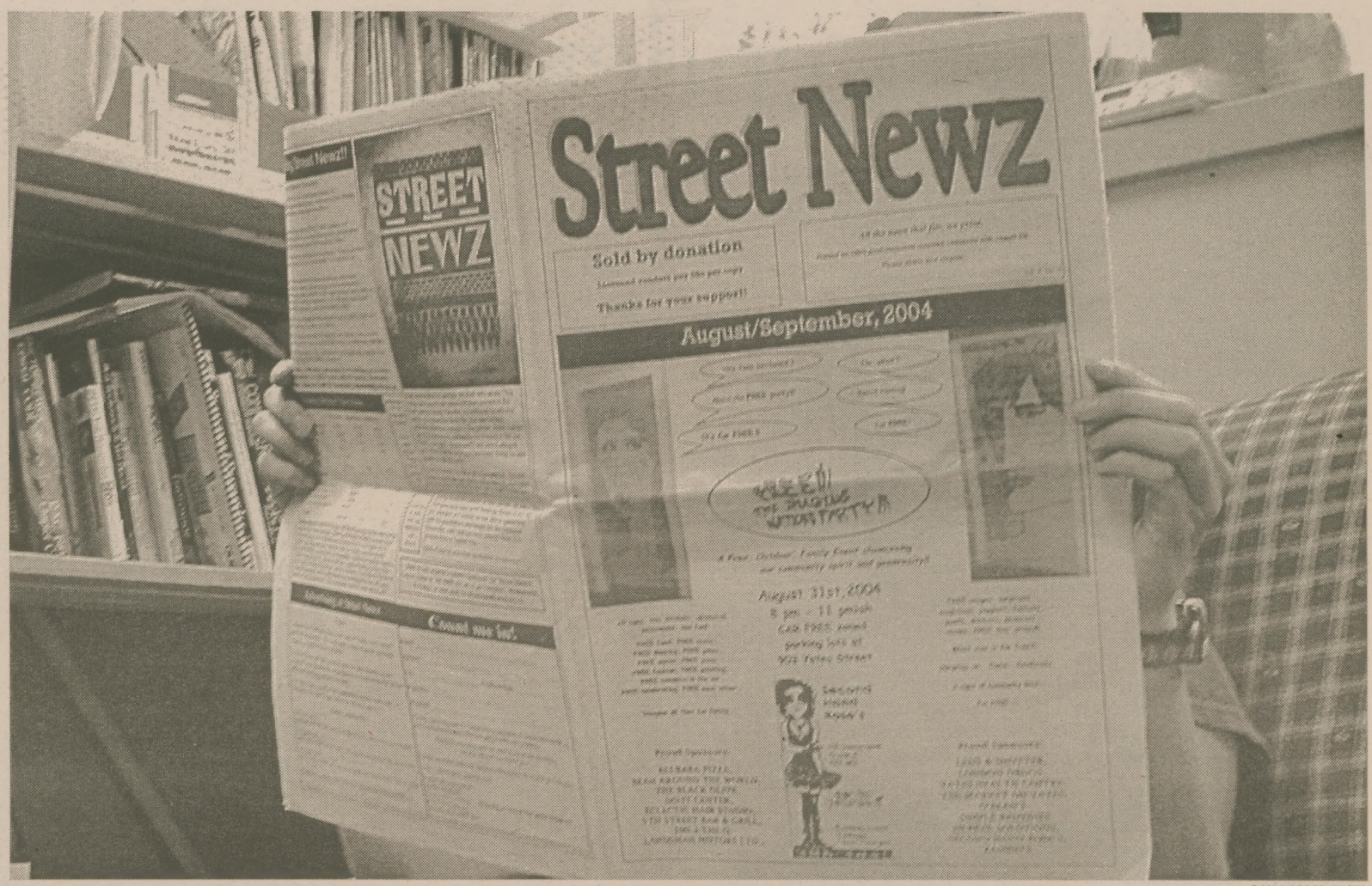
Newz hits the street

by Bryna Hallam



DAN HARDER PHOTO

***Street Newz* provides a voice for socially disadvantaged and economically marginalized people.**

Janine Bandcroft, a UVic graduate and social justice activist, is using her first-hand experience with poverty to help others.

"I've lived in poverty," she said. "I know what it's about."

This experience, along with a desire to bring light to the plight of the poor in Victoria, gave Bandcroft the motivation to start *Street Newz*, a street newspaper dedicated to providing a voice—and income opportunities—to economically marginalized people.

Street newspapers, so-called because they come from the street community, can be found in most major North American cities. As of a year ago, Canada was home to nine such papers.

Like all street newspapers, the primary mission of *Street Newz* is to provide a voice for socially disadvantaged and economically marginalized people—those most affected by poverty and homelessness. In addition, the paper offers the general public an alternative source of information about poverty.

Bandcroft is currently producing the paper on her own. She was denied funding by both the federal and municipal governments, and, hesitant to ask the province for anything—"I don't think this provincial government has much to offer"—Bandcroft remains hopeful that the money will come. For now, about half of the costs are being covered by paper sales, with the balance coming from ad sales and donations.

Street Newz is sold to vendors for 50 cents a copy. The vendors then sell the paper by donation, and keep whatever they receive for it.

"[People] usually pay one or two bucks," said Gordon MacPherson, one of eight *Street Newz* vendors, "but sometimes I get five or 20 bucks."

For MacPherson, who is on a disability pension, selling *Street Newz* provides him with an alternative to panhandling on the street for money.

"I feel much better," he said. "I have money in my pocket. I can get a cold drink or something to eat."

Experienced in the newspaper trade, MacPherson is glad to be selling papers again. He used to be a vendor for *Street Newz*'s predecessor, *The Red Zone*.

MacPherson sells mostly to regular customers, but also finds that visiting tourists—especially Americans familiar with the street newspaper concept from their own communities—are buying copies as well. People who remember *The Red Zone* have also been very supportive.

Bandcroft says that the community has been supportive, noting that the City of Victoria is selling *Street Newz* vendors busking licenses for only $1 instead of the usual $10.

According to Statistics Canada, over 15 per cent of Capital Region residents live below the Low Income Cut-Off Level or poverty line, set in 2001 at an annual income of $16,160 for one person. In 1997 there were an estimated 2,050 homeless people in Victoria, a fraction of the estimated 200,000 homeless people nationwide.

A brief prepared by B.C. Housing's Board of Commissioners notes that a wide range of factors, from broad economic factors and a lack of affordable housing to individual circumstances such as mental illness or substance misuse, contribute to homelessness.

Bandcroft hopes to continue expanding the project. Ultimately, she would like 80 per cent of the submissions to come from the street. To that end, she hopes to set up workshops and training in writing and production.

Although the funding is slow in coming, Bandcroft remains optimistic. "It would be nice to have the next issue paid for," she said, "but it feels really good. I like knowing the information is getting out there, and that people are making a few extra bucks."

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Some of these positions are Work Study, so don't forget to find out if you qualify!

Verti-gone? Vertigo refurbished

Foosball and ping-pong for all

by Elliot Song

Vertigo, the campus nightclub located in the Student Union Building, will be undergoing some major changes near the beginning of September.

The UVSS is planning to reopen Vertigo as an all-ages hangout for students. Foosball, ping-pong tables and a new data projector are a few of the many additions that are being brought in to enhance the space. The new Vertigo is expected to be open until 10 p.m. and Bean There will be extending its operating hours to accommodate. Weekly events such as "Hockey Night on Tuesday" are planned and extensive use of the space by clubs and student unions is expected.

From the very beginning, Vertigo had been plagued with problems involving capacity and access to the bar due to excessive traffic. On the business side of things, it never made any money. "Vertigo was losing tens of thousands of dollars," explained Joanna Groves, chairperson of the UVSS.

Vertigo was unofficially closed in 2001, in part due to a huge fiscal crisis that resulted in the UVSS losing approximately $450,000. "The biggest wound in the whole thing was Vertigo," said Groves. "We had to play it safe; we couldn't afford it."

With the worst of the inherited financial crisis behind them, the UVSS directors are now ready to take a chance. "Now, it's under more control," she said. "It looks like we're doing much better."

Since Vertigo's closure, the UVSS has pondered what the space should be used for.

"In general, the possibility of utilizing the space in Vertigo has been kicked around as long as it's been closed down," explained Hari Alluri, UVSS Director of Academics. It has mainly been used as a space for students to eat, study and simply hang out. Vertigo has also been used as a venue for local artists during SUB parties, as well as a location for club activities.

Alluri said that he doesn't expect a backlash from students because of the nightclub's elimination.

"From a lot of the students that I talk to, a lot of the feeling has been, 'We got the space, let's make something of it,'" he said. "[It is] a good way to reach res kids and provide a service to students who otherwise may not be coming to the SUB."

You can check out the new Vertigo on its grand opening on September 15 during Club Days.

Editorial

Colour-coded drivel

On August 2 the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge, went on television to tell the American people about an urgent new terrorist threat. Al-Qaeda, he said, was planning to attack a number of targets in New York and Washington, including the New York Stock Exchange and Citigroup Center in New York, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in Washington, and the Prudential Financial Building in Newark, N.J.

The country's nifty colour-coded alert system was moving up a notch to "orange," or high.

The information was obtained in the past 36 to 72 hours, he said, causing CNN and other news stations to run constant reports and flashy graphics with no substantial information. Newspapers ran huge, front page stories. After all, if the information was that recently obtained, the attack must be soon, right? Panic!

Uh, no. Only after a 24-hour news cycle had passed did the officials admit that not only was the "intelligence" a few years old, there was no time frame given for the attacks.

It's no surprise that Ridge's urgent announcement was held at the end of the Democratic National Convention, just when that party would be getting an extra boost in the polls. That's because most terror alerts coincide with political news or events that are unfavourable to the current administration.

Want examples? A few days after the Abu Gharib scandal came out, Ridge warned of a potentially major attack this summer. In 2003, shortly after Congress released its damaging 9/11 report and just as 15 U.S. soldiers died over a period of 8 days in Iraq, Homeland Security warned of security attacks on airplanes. The day after Vice-President Dick Cheney was caught lying to the press about the Iraq/Al-Qaeda connection in June, the Justice Department announced they had thwarted an imminent terror plot to bomb malls in Ohio. Later, the government admitted there was nothing imminent at all: the suspect had been arrested last November, and his plot dated to March 2000.

Oh, and the day before this terror alert nonsense was an announcement that the White House is projecting its highest deficit ever: a whopping $445 billion.

It seems these "alerts" are little more than political ploys to take attention away from the severe failings of the Bush administration. Call it coincidence if you'd like, but there are dozens more documented examples where supposed "terror intelligence" comes shortly after damaging political news. After all, there's no better way to ensure complicity than to establish fear.

Soldiers armed with semi-automatic rifles and clad in body armour are standing guard in front of the buildings mentioned above, roadblocks are set up on key streets, vehicles are being searched for bombs, and police are zipping around on motorcycles, toting sub-machine guns.

These security precautions are draining the finances of these cities. Looking past the billions upon billions of wasted money during the Iraq war, this is using money that could be put into health care, education, AIDS research, etc.

Only the Democrat Howard Dean publicly criticized the raising of the alert level, drawing a considerable amount of fire from both Democrats and Republicans. Others didn't, because it's considered unpatriotic (honestly).

Really, if there were any actual hint of a terrorist threat, would Bush have allowed his wife and daughters to visit the Citigroup Center in New York when it was supposedly at risk of an attack? Probably not.

While the guards may stop terrorists who decide on the "run inside as fast you can" tactic, they're unlikely to be much good against truck bombs, planes, or—as CNN reported recently as the new big worry—helicopters. Or zombies, or whatever officials will predict as the next wave of attack on American freedom.

The Americans can post armed guards near the entrance of every major building, but it's still not going to address the issue of why terrorists are drawing up plans to attack the country. It's not your freedom that terrorists hate, Mr. Bush, it's your foreign policy.

Editorial topics are decided at weekly editorial meetings and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all staff members.

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Editor-in-Chief: Sean Patrick Sullivan
Managing Editor: Norman Ed Baskerville
Production Co-ordinator: dan harder
Contributors: Laura Blue, Mike Berry, Stephanie Bowen, Andrew Cienski, Anthony Fratarolli, Bryna Hallam, Tim Hanson, Nic Hume, Melanie Law, Sam Logan, Steven Masuch, Trey McNeil, Briony Smith, Graham Stark, Megan Stewart, Stephen Thomson, Sarah Towle, Ford Walker, Jeffrey Weston

GRAHAM STARK GRAPHIC

"Why can't there just be one huge washroom where no one cares?"

Feds: the new drug dealers

by Norman Ed Baskerville

The Canadian government may soon decide it wants to legalize and regulate the distribution of marijuana, becoming the country's exclusive dealer.

That's right. In the wake of the recently released Statistics Canada Health Survey pegging the number of Canadian pot smokers at an all time high of 12.2 per cent, and public support for legalization high, strolling down to your government sanctioned outlet to purchase taxed marijuana seems plausible.

But why would Canada desire to legalize pot after labeling the weed illegal and dangerous since the 1923 Opium and Drug Act?

It's not because the 2002 Senate Committee on Illegal Drugs presented a "discussion paper" stating that marijuana is not a gateway to harder drugs, like cocaine and heroine, and that fewer than 10 per cent of users become addicted. The paper also states that although a lot of public money is spent on law enforcement, public policies don't seem to discourage use of the drug. I'm sure the Senate's study was thorough, but many anti-pot-legalization proponents have presented equally reliable research that contradicts this paper's findings.

Liberal Health Minister Ujjal Dosanjh recently said, "if you make something illegal, some people are more attracted to it. If you allow people to possess [marijuana], in small quantities for personal use, the allure kind of disappears." This, he says, is one reason why his government is leaning toward decriminalization.

His claim is ridiculous. People don't smoke pot because it's fashionable to be "bad" or to gain social acceptance within their peer group—people smoke pot because being high is a pleasurable and relaxing experience.

And legalization isn't coming because the Senate's "discussion paper" found that "scientific evidence overwhelmingly indicates that cannabis is substantially less harmful than alcohol and should be treated not as a criminal issue but as a social and public health issue." That line of reasoning leads more directly to the conclusion that alcohol should be illegal—but we're getting closer.

Marijuana, like its toxic cousin alcohol, is a highly profitable consumer commodity and after years of paying billions to police it, the feds may have decided they want their cut of bud sales instead. Legalization is coming because of the easy tax revenue.

A new study released by the Fraser Institute states that legalizing marijuana could bring $2 billion in revenue to the government. According to the study, those caught with possession of marijuana are rarely charged, and those convicted rarely go to jail, so legalization would save the Canadian criminal justice system $500 million in court, jails and policing costs.

Vancouver Mayor Larry Campbell also sees pot as an economic boon. In a recent speech to the annual meeting of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, Campbell said that taxes levied on marijuana sales could add to the resources for treatment.

"Remember, the B.C. marijuana trade is estimated at $6 billion annually," he said, "larger than construction or forestry."

Sounds like a win-win situation for everybody: the leftist liberals can smoke their pot in peace, and although the conservative right will dislike it, they'll love the financial gain the tax revenue will bring in.

It seems, however, that the feds have forgotten one little thing—those criminal enterpreneurs making the estimated $6 billion a year probably won't be too eager to share the wealth with the Canadian government. If the judicial system can't shut them down when marijuana is illegal, what makes the government think that "regulation" will work?

And who's going to buy taxed pot when they can get it for less from the dealer down the street, or grow it in their bedroom closet with heat lamps?

The reality is that a federal distribution monopoly will result in the government spending all of its projected tax revenue enforcing grow-op regulations.

Mr. Martin, legalize marijuana if you can, but don't try to compete with existing dealers.

Liberal weiners and right-wing nutjobs

by Tim Hanson

The most horrifying and tragic moments in the history of nations is not when disasters strike and cast fear and doubt into the hearts of millions.

The greatest horror is the realization that the disaster was preventable and that history is doomed to repeat itself.

Once more atop the precipice of our future, I wonder in which direction our new course will take us. I am of course speaking about the United States presidential election later this year.

Democrat nominee John Kerry represents a strong philosophic and economic alternative to Bush's "let fear and the military be the forces which drive our economy" policies. I think Americans realize there are sound fiscal and sociological alternatives to Bush's economic policies that allow jobs to be outsourced to foreign countries. But I am sceptical of Kerry's ability to reach the American populace with that message. He seems to be a strong contender, but as Michael Moore (*Bowling for Columbine* and *Fahrenheit 9/11*) says, the Democrats haven't exactly been doing their job as the loyal opposition.

Bush has commandeered democracy in a way that sickens the mind and turns the stomach. He has taken a fearful and insecure people and convinced them that in order to provide the nation with both economic and physical security, their lives and the lives of their loved ones must be sacrificed. Bush uses military men and women to further a cause that does nothing to stabilize security threats and does everything to line his and his friends' pockets with the profits of conquest and exploitation.

In the face of sweeping Republican law, the Democrats have been almost absent, except to be lapdogs in the Senate, falling to the sway of post 9/11 sentiment. Grief isn't a bad thing; it's how you let that grief shape policy that determines its morality.

John Kerry has his work cut out for him. He has to differentiate himself sufficiently from the Republican policies created within the last three years, many of which he put his stamp of approval on. He has to convince the American people that after three years of the Democrat party following the fear driven status quo, they are now an independent body capable of defending America from terrorist threats. He has to convince America that the tactics that have served their defence so well in the past are now obsolete and in fact causing them harm on the world stage. Ultimately, Kerry has to convince Americans to rethink who they are as a people.

Qwe-Qwal, Willie Seymour (foreground) at the grave in Judge's Row.

IR Wilson archaeologists help Qualicum ritual specialists prepare the pyre and food offerings for the burning ceremony after the reburials.

Salish reburials spark calls for

After a child's skull rolled off the back of a truck near Qualicum Beach, things were never again business as usual

story & photos by Andrew Cienski

I pulled my motorcycle into Judge's Row as the sun came up over Pender Island. Thin bands of waves rolled against the bay behind the houses. The tide was high, but falling back. The reburials had to be completed before it came back in. The remains of over 60 Pentlatch ancestors had been waiting, some half a century, for this day.

A solemn group of people milled around some parked cars. We were directed to spot down the road, around a small square grave beside the road of this exclusive neighbourhood in Qualicum Beach, about an hour north of Nanaimo. Some neighbours stood by, watching from living-room windows, sipping coffee, then cautiously, as though suddenly aware they didn't belong in their own yards, came out and joined the waiting group.

From the far end of the road two columns of celebrants from various Coast Salish traditions began to walk, very slowly, toward us. They held large rattles called thii Mahtt Shulmuxw-Stus, whose long, yellow braids swung in slow, steady rhythm. They came forward only a few metres before stopping. A yo-Kwel leading the procession wailed a repetitve dirge, stopped, and the procession advanced some more. A yo-Kwel is a ceremonial specialist trained in practices around death and grieving; she is also assistant to those who receive and relay messages passed on by ancestral spirits.

When the procession reached the small grave, the two columns moved off to the periphery and covered their thii Mahtt Shulmuxw-Stus with scarves and tucked them away in their backpacks: hidden like so many First Nation ceremonies, from the inquisitive eyes of foreigners. The yo-Kwel's ceremony is more ancient than anyone can say for sure, and has never been shared with anthropologists or ethnographers. When missionaries cracked down on traditional native practices, the ancestors warned the specialists to go underground. All present were asked to put away their cameras.

"Times change but our practices and our customs never change," said Willie Seymour, a Qwe-Qwal, a traditional ceremonial speaker.

A folded blanket containing ancestral remains was placed into the hole and re-covered with dirt, before a sandstone slab was set to cover it. That too was covered with soil.

The remains re-interred, or repatriated, in Judge's Row had been dug up during local property developments. The quiet bay at the foot of Qualicum Beach is one of the most valuable pieces of real estate on the east coast of the island, but for at least 5,000 years before European contact, this was a Pentlatch burial ground. This Salish group was all but extinguished by smallpox, and their language snuffed out by government-backed residential schools. But many among the Qualicum nation lay claim to blood ties with the Pentlatch.

One of these is chief-elected councillor Kim Recalma-Clutesi, who has been instrumental in repatriating the ancestral remains. The process has involved negotiations with every level of government, working with archeologists and the Royal B.C. Museum, and discovering and arranging the most respectful way to re-inter the remains. This was a particularly delicate aspect because there is no custom in Salish tradition for dealing with desecration of gravesites. "No songs or ceremonies exist for when our ancestors are dug up like that," explained William White, aboriginal liaison officer at the University of Victoria, at a banquet after the reburial ceremony. "Legal infractions occurred here. Spiritual infractions occurred here. Cultural infractions occurred here."

To decipher what needed to be done, and how, specialists like the yo-Kwel had to be consulted. They in turn performed ritual burning ceremonies and consulted the spirits of those whose graves had been disturbed. The ancestors told them being dug up was "like being disturbed in your sleep by having a complete stranger rip the blankets from you."

There have been a lot of rude awakenings around Qualicum Beach over the last few years. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) woke up to find business would no longer go on as usual when on March 11, 2003, a child's skull rolled off the back of a truck in Deep Bay Harbour. Like Judge's Row, the harbour and the spit that protects it are also traditional burial grounds. And like Judge's Row they have seen a lot of development in the past four decades.

All the residents know there are bones under the ground. "Put a shovel in, you're coming up with bones," one resident told me. In the 50s, when the bay was seeing its first major development, skeletal remains were so common people were known to set skulls on posts at the ends of their driveways.

You couldn't get away with anything that extreme today. As a site of cultural and archeological importance, the area is protected under the Heritage Conservation Act. Violators could face a fine between $50,000 and $1,000,000. There are over 30,000 sites in B.C. officially under the act's protection, which also covers every site that has not yet been found.

Considering B.C. coasts have been inhabited for more than 10,000 years, Dr. Quentin Mackie, a UVic anthropologist, predicts the known sites constitute about five per cent of what's actually out there. Imagine the size of the government agency required to monitor such a huge number of culturally significant sites. But with last year's cutbacks to the archeology branch of the Ministry of Sustainable Resources, there are only six people on the job.

Bedwell Harbour, Pender Island, Craig Bay, Shingle Point, Salt Spring Island … to name only a handful of the traditional cemeteries currently undergoing official development. Most non-official excavations are never heard about because developers either dump burial remains along with unwanted back dirt, or rebury them without notifying authorities. Since the signing of the act in 1996, no one has ever been issued a fine.

Joey Caro, a Cowichan Tribes member recently wrote, "often we do not hear about discoveries [of burial sites] of this nature at all for fear that the development will be financially impeded." On the day of the Qualicum reburial, the same observation was made by a resident of Judge's Row, where a single property recently sold for $800,000.

"Dig four feet anywhere and you'll find bones. But if you report it you delay the [development] project by two years. So when you dig up bones you simply re-cover them again. Everyone does

William White (centre) explains the significance of the burning ceremony rites to officials from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, officials from the Department of Justice and others present.

Qualicum Band members fill in the grave at Judge's Row.

Staff Sergeant Van Otterloo lends a hand to fill in mass grave at Deep Bay Harbour.

r respect of dead

it ... Not to be disrespectful," he explained.

Though he was exaggerating—in actuality the permit process takes about a month—the ease with which sites are disturbed and go unreported extends to even government agencies.

In 2001 the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) installed two septic tanks and a septic field without notifying the archeology branch. Only last year, with the discovery of the skull, and the archeological assessment that ensued from a Nanaimo coroner's finding did the process of remediation get underway.

Remediation did not come easily. Recalma-Clutesi had to drag each ministry responsible for digging up the graves—Vancouver Island Health Authority, DFO, Ministry of Transportation, Deep Bay Harbour Authority—kicking and screaming to the negotiation table, and badger them for a year and a half before they finally owned up to their part in the "unfortunate event."

Standing at the foot of the rise in Deep Bay Harbour, in front of the row of 14 people, each holding a basket containing a blanket folded around ancestral remains, Willie Seymour spoke to a group of over 100 observers. "We live in a multi-cultural society, and we ask that our culture be respected. Some of these remains predate the pyramids of Egypt. They remind us of our ancestry, remind us of truth." Later he added "There is no excuse for ignorance ... It is good to change; it is wrong to forget."

Again the yo-Kwel sang as the contents of the baskets were laid in the mass grave. The remains were of over 60 individuals, all from excavations around Qualicum, most from Deep Bay. The archeologists that had worked to retrieve the bones and bone fragments from the site assisted in the ceremony, digging and refilling the graves. Over the past 18 months they had developed a particularly close relationship with Qualicum Band leaders and ceremonial specialists.

When the skull was found, IR Wilson, a Victoria based archeological company, was called in to assess the site as part of the remediation required by the Heritage Act. Their job was to report on exactly it was that had been disturbed. Part of the work took place in the harbour, where nine graves were found. All had been destroyed by the excavation in the harbour, all except for one. The only intact grave belonged to a woman in her mid-40s. She was thought to have died about 3,000 years ago and was found lying on her side, face in her hands. Dr. Mackie suspects her position might have had something to do with her role in society. He added that another body was found on Pender Island, sitting up holding a spoon in the mouth.

The woman found in Deep Bay was completely surrounded by a red ochre powder. The colour red is considered by cultures the world over to have spiritual significance. In this case it is thought to have been used to facilitate her traversal from the earthly realm to the celestial one. That so much ochre was found probably indicates she was a ceremonial specialist herself, and probably a shaman.

Her forehead, and that of all nine skulls found in this excavation, were re-formed according to an ancient Salish practice reserved for nobility. As infants, planks were strapped tightly to their foreheads, flattening and sloping them backward. It was a way of distinguishing them, and adding to their beauty—it must also have been extremely painful.

Surrounding her head was a "crown" of obsidian and nephrite (a kind of jade) shards called microblades. Microblades are used by being placed end to end along a bone or antler to create a continuous cutting edge such as a knife.

The presence of these crystals also showed evidence that the Pentlach participated in trading jade from the Bridge River/Lytton/Lillooet area of the interior, said Bib Griffin of the Royal B.C. Museum. Though the obsidian has not been sourced, he said it is likely from a location in Washington or Oregon, giving an indication of the complexity of early Salish economies.

The reason for the crystals being in the grave, though, is something of a mystery. They may have been placed around her simply because she had an affinity for crystals, but the usage might also have been ceremonial. If that is the case, the significance of the grave, archeologically speaking, would be greatly heightened. Ceremonial crystals have never been found to be used in this part of the world.

Unfortunately, because all of the other graves were dug up, loaded into trucks and dumped into a ravine, it's impossible to derive any useful information from them. Though more microblades were found amid the piles of back dirt, only their placement in relation to the graves and the bodies could have given any indication as to their purpose.

But of course it wasn't ethnographic information the Qualicum were after. Working with IR Wilson's crew, they sifted through 11 truckloads of back dirt to retrieve every human fragment possible, so that they could rebury their ancestors in their entirety.

All was done at the expense of the DFO. Halfway through the process it pulled the plug on the project, claiming the cost was exceeding expectations. Ian Wilson, president of the archeological company, said it was difficult to make out just how much material needed to be sifted because it had been dumped in a ravine.

Though it's impossible to say for certain, there were suspicions the DFO was trying to stall the assessment because of the next item on the to-do list. Archeologists had to take core samples to assess if there were more graves under the harbour. The fear was that if more graves were found, the septic field would have to be removed. Despite DFO efforts, however, the samples were taken and more graves were found. And so it was obliged by the Heritage Conservation Act to remove the illegally installed septic field and tanks. The core samples found the graves to be about 5,580 years old.

At a banquet of salmon, rice, and apple pie after the reburials, Willie Seymour spoke. His sentiments were reiterated by representatives of Salish Nations from all over Vancouver and neighbouring islands. They said this was not a Qualicum issue; that the disrespect showed to aboriginal burial grounds was not even a First Nations issue, but a Canadian one. If First Nations people are to be considered as equals with the rest of Canadians, then their dead must be included in that membership, and their burial places have to be respected as much as those of European, African, and Asian burial places. Regardless of the inconvenience to developers and loss of equity to property owners, perhaps there is a higher obligation, not only to aboriginal people, but to what we stand for as Canadians.

Shawn Atleo, regional chief of British Columbia to the Assembly of First Nations, challenged Canadians.

"[We have] an obligation to build on our higher commons, our sense of justice, and rather than [stress] our differences, to leave this world a softer, gentler place."

Wiliam White welcomes Staff Sergeant Bill Van Otterloo of Oceanside RCMP to the Deep Bay Harbour reburial site.

Singing your way to better sex

by Sean Patrick Sullivan

Instructional ukelele ditties about cunnilingus may seem pretty unusual, but Vancouver duo the Wet Spots have been titillating audiences for the past two years with polite but scandalous songs about threesomes, sex toys and naughty neighbours.

Now, the husband and wife duo of Cass King and John Woods are amping up their nightclub act with "Sing Your Way to Better Sex," a musical comedy debuting at the Victoria Fringe Festival later this month.

King promises a more blatantly educational show, with diagrams, sketches, sing-along songs, and even exercises to improve pubic muscles.

"The premise is it's a night school class, kind of like Basketweaving 101. But this is our night school college class for the sex education class you never got."

Those familiar with the Wet Spots' nightclub act—which has garnered rave reviews all over Canada's west coast and in the New York Burlesque Festival—know the colourful clothing, spanking, playful audience interaction, and general naughtiness that run rampant in the duo's performance and music. The upcoming Fringe gig is a way of taking that to the next level, they say.

King describes "Sing Your Way ..." as a quantum leap for the Wet Spots. Their dedication is evident even in our interview time. At 9 a.m., the pair have already been up for hours working on the show. They are, to say the least, excited.

"This show is going to get the audience up around and moving," explained Woods. "We're going to be doing similar things to the nightclub act, like polling the audience, but we're also interested in what our audience's experience has been like. When was the last time they had any sex education?"

Several new songs, including "The Masturbation Sing-along Song," will be debuted, and the pair has put together sketches with titles like "Uncle Scroty's Field Guide to the Pervs." It's certainly enough to put the "adult" in adult education.

"People are uncomfortable talking about sex," explains King, also a writer and former sex columnist, "even though it surrounds us all. [Most people] don't talk about that in polite conversations. But we do, so it's liberating for us in a sense, and it's fascinating when people come up after a show and tell us what they think, complete with personal anecdotes."

For instance, at the end of a show in the States, a drunk man stumbled up to the stage, looked at Woods, and slurred "I can take four fingers, man, but five's too much."

Another time, three college kids came up to Woods and King after a show and said that they had been inspired to have a threesome. By the time the Wet Spots were back in Vancouver, webcam shots of the tryst were waiting in their e-mail inbox.

Inspiring? Certainly, but not only for the young 'uns. The last couple of shows held at the Comedy Cellar were packed with more over-30s than under-30s, and even a few seniors crowded in near the front of the stage. Woods said it's all about promoting a healthy attitude towards sex for people of any age, and getting a few laughs, too.

"Whenever we're talking to the audience, we're like, 'You know how it is when you have a big orgy at your house?' and we just assume the audience does all of these things. We don't portray sex or hot sex as being the exclusive territory of young, hard-bodied 19-year-olds," he explained.

PROVIDED PHOTO

King and Woods bring sex education to the masses, including your Grandma.

"I think a lot of the time people who are a bit older are saying, 'I still like to get it on. I like to get a little crazy and have a good time,' but the only references to sex they're seeing in the media ... you'd think that only people 19 through 24 are having sex. We're coming out and going 'Grandma likes to get crazy too, ha ha!' "

It was a shock to discover that their music goes over equally well in a punk-rock bar or a conservative, suburban room, adds King. "We went out thinking we were so cool and edgy. But it was a shock that we could play this for people who are elderly. And they get it. Most of the time, they get it."

After the Victoria Fringe the pair will be making their way to the Vancouver Fringe Festival, then embarking on a university tour through central and eastern Canada. "Sing Your Way to Better Sex" starts Aug. 26 and continues through until September 6.

Check show times at www.victoriafringe.com or www.wetspots-music.com.

Fringe for beginners

by Stephanie Bowen

Victoria's Intrepid Theatre is gearing up to dole out its 18th helping of wacky Fringe festivities, beginning on August 25 with the "Fringe Benefit." This one-night-only performance stars the likes of Charles Ross, rumoured one-man *Lord of the Rings* ingénue, a fitting start to what will no doubt be two weeks of zany, and oftentimes painful, alternative theatre.

So what is this Fringe Festival, actually? Victoria has been hosting performers and their considerable talents for 18 years, yet a good chunk of residents have never attended a show and know very little about the work of the 100-200 artsy types who invade the Garden City every year.

Where do they come from? How do they get here? Most importantly, what exactly do they do while they're here?

In the 1940s, alternative U.K. theatre troupes longed to participate in the renowned Edinburgh Theatre Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland. Due to a lack of space and professional theatre's snooty attitude, they were denied access, but, being resilient, preformed regardless. In the streets, in taverns and pubs, in fields, they sought audience on the fringe of the mainstream shows. Get it?

In the early 80s the trend caught on in Canada, beginning with Edmonton, and spread like wildfire. Today there are roughly 20 festivals across the country, organized as a circuit for entertainers to begin in Montreal in June and wrap things up in Vancouver in September. Edmonton is the largest and most intense of the festivals, encompassing over 100 acts, while Victoria is on the smaller side.

Victoria tends to fall directly after the madness of the Edmonton festival for most groups, enabling them to bask in West Coast sunshine and relax a little. Subsequently, the tone of the Victoria festival is more laid back.

"Victoria is a nice break for the performers," laughed Janet Musil, the festival's producer. "For a lot of them, it's like going to a spa."

Also, as a plus, being at the end of the list promises more poise and polish from groups who have been presenting their work all summer. Practice, after all, makes perfect. Most of the time, anyway.

"I remember one summer," Munsil explained, "a group of nine had been traveling in a bus together for four months, and by the time they reached Victoria they absolutely hated one another.

"Though that's rare," she quickly added.

What is perhaps most striking about the Fringe Festival is its broad range of talent.

Comedians, actors and dancers of all levels and focuses share the stage, and are entirely responsible for their own success (or lack thereof).

The Fringe is essentially a self-serve theatre festival. Performers apply for $450, are selected on a first come, first serve basis, and have total artistic license and responsibility.

This means that everything from costuming to promotion to direction and set design lies on the shoulders of what is typically a very small cast and crew, hence the rugged nature of some of the shows.

Still, any venue so willing and able to give the little guy an audience can really only be applauded. Applauded, laughed at, cried at, forgiven or revered. Apparently, on the fringe, it's all possible.

Who to See (if you only see a few); some top picks this year:

"Pinocchio": Screwed and Clued deliver a saucy grown-up twist on a childhood favorite.

"Benjamin": dark stand-up comedy, direct from New Zealand.

"The Rap Canterbury Tales": Baba Brinkman raps the Canterbury Tales!

"Teaching Shakespeare": a hilarious parody of a university English class. Because we don't get enough as is.

"Curse of the Trickster": T.J. Dawe, a UVic Alumnus and Fringe favourite unleashes a mighty rant, apparently not for the faint of heart.

"Patti Fedy in The Hunt": Voted 'Best of Fest' in Winnipeg this year, Patti Fedy is said to be as funny as she is heartwarming.

Tickets to various Fringe Shows run between $5 and $9. They go on sale August 23 and are available via hotline (250-383-2691), though 50 per cent of tickets are allotted for sale at the door. A promotional pass is offered, boasting 10 shows for $57, a steal of a deal.

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Net labels provide releases on Internet

by Steven Masuch

Thanks to Comfort Stand Recordings, it's easy to get free music over the Internet without the hassles of your ISP knocking on your door.

Run by a group of music enthusiasts, Comfort Stand is a record label that provides all of its releases free of charge over the Internet. With over 50 unique albums and singles available, that's a lot of music for nothing.

The style of music available varies widely in style and content. Otis Fodder, one of the staff members of Comfort Stand, explained what the label is all about.

"We want to be a broad label releasing all sorts of styles," he said. "Music is music, and all of us involved listen to a very wide variety."

Albums vary from recordings of patrons at a 7-11, dance mixes sampling homemade recordings, experimental ambient music, and songs from personally recorded tapes found at thrift stores.

Fodder says Comfort Stand was created to support an open community where artists can have total say over 100 per cent of their work and own all their rights.

"The label is a labour of love, and a very fun project that is a long term one," he added.

Use of the Internet as a distribution channel for music is growing. Several record labels, including Comfort Stand, can be found at the Netlabel Catalogue, a list of over 100 free online music labels.

Pay services are also starting to take off. iTunes, the music service run by Apple, has had over 100 million songs downloaded since its launch just over a year ago. Even Wal-Mart is getting a piece of the action with its music download service.

Fodder, when asked if these services could succeed, said, "I think so. I look forward to seeing how all this will evolve over the next few years."

Comfort Stand Recordings is less than a year old, but Fodder is optimistic about its success.

"I think we were successful when the first person downloaded our first album ... The label is all about having fun, sharing and turning people on to new sounds."

Find the entire Netlabel Catalogue at www.phlow.net/netlabel_catalogue/.

Crowe's raw talent shines through

Allison Crowe
Secrets
Rubeneqsue Records

by Sarah Towle

PROVIDED PHOTO

Singer, songwriter and pianist Allison Crowe dazzles with her new album.

Offering an eclectic mix of blues, jazz, folk, and classical, indie artist Allison Crowe transcends many different musical genres on her latest CD, *Secrets*.

A native of Nanaimo, the 22-year-old singer, songwriter and pianist has toured with Jewel and shared the stage with Canada's jazz icon Diana Krall. Crowe mixes the mellow and traditional jazz styling of Norah Jones with the pop sounds of Sarah McLachlan. With the addition of her own powerhouse vocals she creates a truly unique sound.

Secrets begins with "How Long," a rhythmic and soulful song demonstrating her powerful vocal range, as well as her strength as a songwriter. Next up, she covers the Counting Crows' "Raining in Baltimore," adding a much softer and more subdued sound than on Adam Duritz's raspy version. As well, Crowe re-arranges Leonard Cohen's "Joan of Arc," which presents a dreary account of the French heroine's death. She brightens up his drab and monotone version with melodic vocals and a background accordion, making the song her own.

However, Crowe's real flair and dexterity as a musician shine through on the final track, "Whether I'm Wrong." With every note sung perfectly in tune and without one instrumental flaw, it is hard to believe this song was recorded live at the New VI's TV special "Inside Pandora's Box." Armed with her strong, bluesy voice and her piano, Crowe delivers a stellar performance.

Despite Crowe's obvious strong talent, the CD itself screams of low budget production with weak backup vocals and muffled instrumental sounds. However, Crowe's raw talent on *Secrets* shows much promise and will only flourish when she is signed to a major record company.

The entire album is available in in streaming audio on her website, www.allisoncrowe.com.

Auf der Maur blends the heavy and melodic

Melissa Auf der Maur
Auf der Maur
CAPITOL

by Trey McNeil

I have been in love with Melissa Auf der Maur since her humble beginnings with the Montreal band Tinker. I stayed with her through her Hole years and, though I considered it selling out a bit, I followed her tragically short stint with the Smashing Pumpkins (before King Billy Corgan broke up the band, only to contradict himself and start another one). But I digress. Despite what you may have heard, Auf der Maur is a great album, if you're into hard rock.

After a deafening rush of ambient noise, the album opens with "Lightning Is My Girl" and while I haven't quite been able to decipher all the innuendo, I can say that the lyrics are clever, interesting and almost always double-edged. The music sounds eerily like Veruca Salt, especially with the double-layered vocals that have Auf der Maur singing back-up to herself.

The album is ripe with headbanging fare, yet despite Auf der Maur's hardcore credentials, it still feels strange to hear her utter the word "fuck" in her lyrics. The instrumentation on many tracks is heavy, yet strangely melodic, and the vocals are unusually sweet and soft. This hard exterior is broken at the end of one track, when the delicate vocals are backed by a plucked flamenco guitar and carousel organ. The effect is pretty cool.

For my money, the best song on the whole ding-dang disc is the second version of "Taste You," which is sung in French, Melissa's native tongue. While the English version is melodic, versatile and passionate, the French version is made even better by the fact that it is in her own language. There are some English songs that just sound better in French, and this is one of them. Yet my favourite moment of the album is at the very end of "I Need I Want I Will," when the vocals go into a choral echo backed by a cello and harpsichord, fading away, almost shimmering, leaving only the cello and harpsichord to carry it out.

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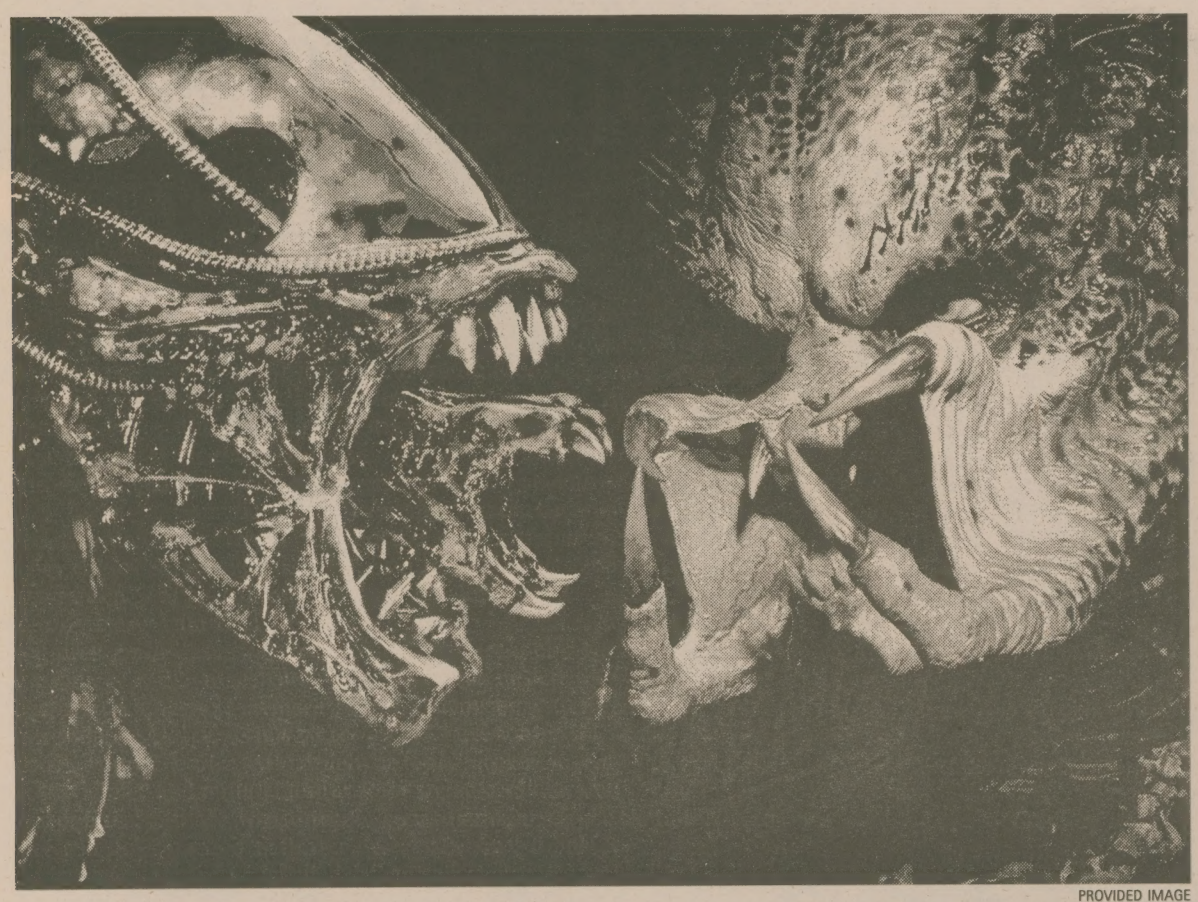

PROVIDED IMAGE

Wang-head versus vagina-mouth

The battle of the box office: whoever wins, we lose

by Briony Smith

Alien vs. Predator comes screaming into the notoriously dumb summer market, blessedly free from the condemnation of the critics and bursting with all the action that a top-notch ad campaign can promise.

Despite the fact AVP smacks of a last-ditch effort by lazy screenwriters looking for an easy, nay, three-word pitch, the concept has been around for over a decade. *Predator* fans with a quick eye spotted what looked like the skull of an Alien in the Predator's trophy room in 1990's *Predator 2*, which spawned a splash of AVP-themed entertainment, including popular comics and video games.

The movie execs know that they need to rake in the cash during the summer box office, and to get asses into the theatre they need a combination of violence—albeit tempered with a PG-13 rating—and monsters with faces that subtly titillate the pimply teenagers without actually having to pay any B-rate actresses to show their tits. In this day and age when young tots can download any film they please off the Internet, the bigwigs know that the only draw they have is big bad action that only gleams just right in the big top.

AVP is the perfect vehicle to make money. The effects and the C-rate director and actors are cheap, the screenplay is whisper-thin, the rating is teen-friendly, and the ad campaign makes it look better than it is.

The film takes place relatively independent of the other series. A corporation discovers a heat bloom in the middle of Antarctica, so its boss (Lance Henriksen) assembles a crack team of international character actors to get to the bottom of this. Of course, it has to do with Aliens and Predators and silly things like that.

Horror/sci-fi movies rely on an interesting cast of characters with entertaining dialogue, so that you ostensibly care about them when they're pulverized by a CGI masterstroke.

It seems that the makers of AVP, much like the creatures of the title, have evolved past feelings or any sort of human connection: the people in this film exist only to be cocooned, run through, eaten, etc. They are merely walking targets, identifiable only by their Scottish/English/American/Italian/French/Danish/Czech/German accents. There is literally only one attempt at character development, and that is when the Scottish character actor hauls out some pictures of his kids. The execs have evolved beyond story into pure action.

For what it's worth, the action is decent. Not excellent, not top-drawer, but decent. The Predators have cool weapons, including the slashers that whoosh out of their wrists, and the new addition of spiky throwing stars. The Aliens are as scary as usual and, since this is the first Alien film since the dawn of great computer animation, they are much more agile and fluid.

But the low budget and teen-friendly rating means less gore and less elaborate action, leaving the viewer with far fewer thrills than the ones in say, *Aliens* or *Predator*, forcing audiences to content themselves with the faintly obscene faces of the beasts. Giger's phallic masterpiece is in full-swing here, placed at several intervals in front of the gaping mouth of the Predator, which looks eerily like a lady's naughty parts (granted, some very ugly lady's parts), making one yearn for the Alien to pull its trademark deadly-alien-stabbing-penis-mouth move and plunge into the Predator's vagina face, despite your brain rooting for the more humanoid Predator.

AVP gives its viewers their jollies in the subtlest and oddest way; by mixing sex in with the violence in a subconscious way, the public can satisfy its craving for bloodshed and satiation at the same time. This is best illustrated by the way the facehugger works in this film. In previous *Alien* movies, how it attached itself down the throat was unclear. This film has the benefit of CGI-generated slow motion to show it: a small penile appendage emerges out of a small set of lips on the underbelly of the creepy-crawly. Despite being shown in slow-motion, the shot is over in an instant, leaving the viewer feeling satisfied that the obnoxious character actor's accent will be silenced, and that the thing got its wang in the hole.

Film has been in a slow decline in the last several decades, but AVP is rare in that it makes no excuses for its primary objectives: it wants to give you a full-on action-fest, unencumbered by plot or character, with just the right amount of sub-conscious eroticism to give you that extra jolt. My recommendation is to cheat the execs out of their third Ferrari, save the $10 and stay home instead—you'll get the same result from playing a bloody video game and jerking off.

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Hollywood evolution

Alien
Considered a seminal sci-fi film, Ridley Scott's *Alien* has stood the test of time as one of the all-time great space movies, as well as all-time great Sigourney-Weaver-in-her-undies flicks. The sparse sets and action may strike movie-goers of today as boring, but the true film-lover can appreciate the film—the story of miners who answer what they perceive as a distress call and unwittingly pick up a stray "xenomorph"—as an excellent study in mood and human nature, as well as the mystery of how Tom Skerritt is one of the only men on earth who can wear a mustache. The famous chest-burster scene is notable, due mainly to the use of animatronics rather than computer animation, and the high perve factor of H. R. Giger's infamous design that resembles a penis with an underbite.

Interesting DVD Commentary Factoid: During a scene where the ladies are discussing their wearing of skimpy white underwear on-screen, Tom Skerritt jokes to Harry Dean Stanton, "We were right there watching, weren't we, Harry?" who replies, "Yeah, I was thinking about pussy the whole time."

Aliens
A pre-*Terminator* James Cameron was handed the reins of the series and he gave Ripley and the Aliens his usual loud, gung-ho treatment. An extremely entertaining film, *Aliens* follows Ripley when she is called back into duty to assist a group of Marines determining what happened to the colonists who settled on the Aliens' home planet. While this film isn't as good a "film" as *Alien*, *Aliens* is a great movie that benefits from humour, top-notch character work by the Marines, and the touching subplot of Ripley mothering young colonist Newt. Despite being made 20 years ago, it has great effects and stands the test of time.

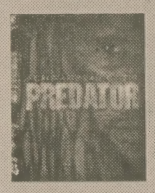
Interesting DVD Commentary Factoid: Sigourney Weaver was nominated for an Academy Award for her work.

Alien 3
A gong-show from the start, David "I need more Jungian psychology! More!" Fincher's 1992 film was mangled by a multitude of setbacks during production. In addition to numerous script problems—including early drafts set on a wooden planet inhabited by monks, without an appearance from the Alien—Fincher walked off the set in a fit of bratty rage and disowned the film, citing massive studio interference. The film is set on a remarkably unsexy prison planet, where Ripley crash-landed and must now do battle with the beast … again. Features ugly production design lifted from a steel mill, but without the fun gay steelworkers. Pity.

Interesting DVD Commentary Factoid: This shoddy sequel is so lame that the only people they managed to drag in for the commentary include the cinematographer, the editor, some effects people, and a couple of bit players.

Alien: Resurrection
Visionary French director Jean-Pierre Jeunet (*Delicatessen*, *Amélie*) attempted to resurrect the *Alien* series by cloning Ripley, a DMSP (dubious movie science procedure) which morphs her into a human-Alien hybrid, and trademark French whimsy! The storyline involves the Aliens getting loose of their corporate breeders/captors and running amok. The film is very Jeunet, which means a lot of enjoyable campy humour (including a man getting skewered in the head, reaching back, grabbing a piece of his brain and then staring at it quizzically), and the only thing missing is Ripley's Alien love child singing some Edith Piaf tunes.

Interesting DVD Commentary Factoid: Jeunet had the "newborn" Alien designed to be anatomically correct, with both sets of genitals clearly visible. The studio freaked out and demanded that they remove the offending hermaphroditic appendages in post-production.



Predator
In this primer for American state governorship, Arnold Schwarzenegger (California) battles alongside Jesse Ventura (Minnesota) and Sonny Landham (Kentucky, but he lost) against a mysterious invisible monster that turns out to be a gigantic Alien trophy-hunting on earth, a plight less frightening than the fact that the future's obligatory hairstyle is plastic dreadlocks. The Predator, with its eerily vaginal mouth, has all sorts of bells and whistles, and neat toys to slice, dice, skewer, and stab the puny humans with, but he's no match for Ah-nuld and his biceps, which look like a couple of puppies in gunny-sacks mounted to his limbs.

Interesting DVD Commentary Factoid: Director John McTiernan, when discussing the scene where the Predator wields its bloody trophy in the air, says that he thought that the scripted shot of the army men shown as having been stuffed by the Predator was "too gross," despite the fact that the "better" shot in the movie shows the Predator ripping Billy's arm off, kicking his body to the ground, and grasping his blood-soaked and guts-clad skull.

Predator 2
An equation: Gary Busey in a silver lame suit + "Pussyface Predator" - Ah-nuld – a DVD commentary = Dreck.

NIC HUME PHOTO

Elaborate acrobatics are possible for experienced 'boarders.

Victoria's latest craze

by Ford Walker

A new sport is making waves off the shores of Victoria, and if you've ever walked by the beach near Beacon Hill Park, you're sure to have seen it.

An odd mix of windsurfing, wakeboarding, and paragliding, kiteboarding involves riding a board similar to a wakeboard and being pulled around by a huge kite that's strapped to the chest. Basically, it's wakeboarding plus steering the boat, all at the same time. Around Victoria, it has been growing in popularity every year.

The last couple of years have seen the numbers of kiteboarders double with each season. With the amount of surfers on the island, it may come as no surprise that quite a few are giving up the waves for the wind. Imagine it: surfing Jordan River by morning and kitesurfing at Gnit Gnat lake in the evening. One of the perks of kiteboarding, that its wave-oriented brother surfing lacks, is that it only needs two ingredients: wind and water.

Local kiteboarding legend Dwayne "The Crabber" Strong has been active in the sport since its inception five years ago.

"Remember when you were a kid and you wished you had a jetpack?" he asked. "Well, this is about as close as you'll get."

When a good kiteboarder is lifted from the water, they are easily 10 metres in the air and can fly for a half a mile or more! For all those interested in beginning this sport, don't be put off: you can control how high you fly with the size of kite you use. Now, I bet most of you are thinking that this sport must be cold! If anyone has ever tried to swim out in the strait, you probably lasted about three seconds before you ran out, screaming and wondering how long hypothermia takes to set in. Kiteboarding, though, isn't quite like surfing or swimming.

"Of course it's cold," said Strong, "But unlike surfing, where you're in the water all the time, this sport is mostly above water." Still, a five to seven millimetre wetsuit is recommended. Better yet, most locals wear the more expensive drysuits, which keeps the wearer even warmer.

For all you extreme sports enthusiasts and adrenaline junkies out there, kiteboarding is becoming the new thing. Tired of the over-representation of surfing in the media or getting snaked on every wave you drop in? Well, kiteboarding is for you. It is expensive, though, and it is recommended to begin with used equipment until you are confident in your ability. A brand new kite will set you back $1500-1700, but the used prices are much cheaper. Also, keep in mind that you'll need more than one kite, because wind conditions will determine which kite is best.

What about us poor university students who don't have a couple of Gs to drop on a new sport? Well, for about $100 bucks per lesson, B.C. Kiteboarding can hook you up with all the equipment and training you need, while forgoing such an expensive investment and the risk that you'll buy it all, only to find out that this isn't for you. These guys are also going high tech, with a wireless radio system that will allow the instructor to communicate with the boarder who's gliding through the air.

And the best part is, as Strong assures any potential newcomer, "what it takes you three years to learn windsurfing will take you about a month on a kite." It's like riding a bicycle—the hardest part is the beginning, after that it's all downhill.

NIC HUME PHOTO

Billy Kipling soars into the wild blue yonder.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

VENUS RISING!
The Greater Vancouver Island Sculptors Guild will have an exhibit and sale of sculpture created from a variety of materials to capture man's whimsical, emotional and imaginative relationship with the sea at The Maritime Museum of BC, Bastion Square, Victoria. Show runs from June 25 - October 17, 2004. Hours are daily from: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call (250) 642-6065.

FREE SPANISH LESSONS
Beginning September 14 at 7 p.m. for Beginners. September 15 at 7 p.m. for Intermediate to Advanced. September 17 at 4 p.m. (Beginners). September 17 at 6:30-8 p.m.(Children to 7-13).
St. Saviour's Anglican Church, 310 henry St. Call 384-8773 for more information.

Good-Hearted Volunteers Needed!
At Recreation Integration Victoria we facilitate active lifestyles for people with disabilities. By making only a small time commitment, youcould have the power to change someone's life. Looking for volunteers to provide one-on-one assistance for people with disabilities in a recreational setting. To get involved or for more information, please call Dustin at 477-6314

MENTORS NEEDED
Mentor an elementary student 1 hr/week. Play games, sports, make crafts, read and cook. For more info. call Bonnie at Big Brothers big Sisters 475-1117 ext. 46

Legendary AFRO-CUBAN ALL STARS light up OPEN AIR! Wednesday, September 22nd Juan De Marcos' Afro-Cuban all Stars in concert. Tickets on sale now. McPherson Box Office (walk up or charge by phone: 386-6121) Doors: 7:30 p.m. Show: 8:00 p.m..

HEY YOU!

Derrick, Could you please stop leaving your whiskey bottles in the Church choir room? People who get paid to sing drunk in choir on Sunday mornings have no excuse for leaving their empties. Alice.

MS: When will you finally notice me trying to get your attention? BG.

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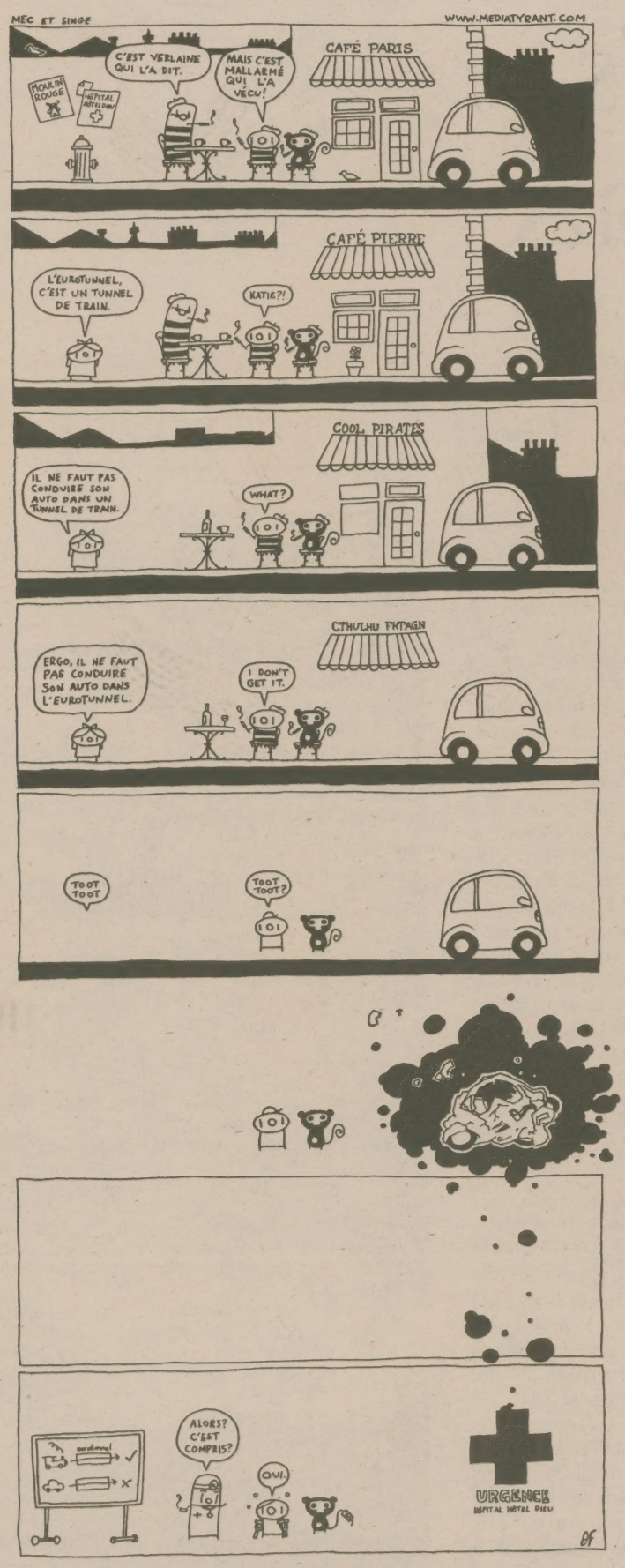

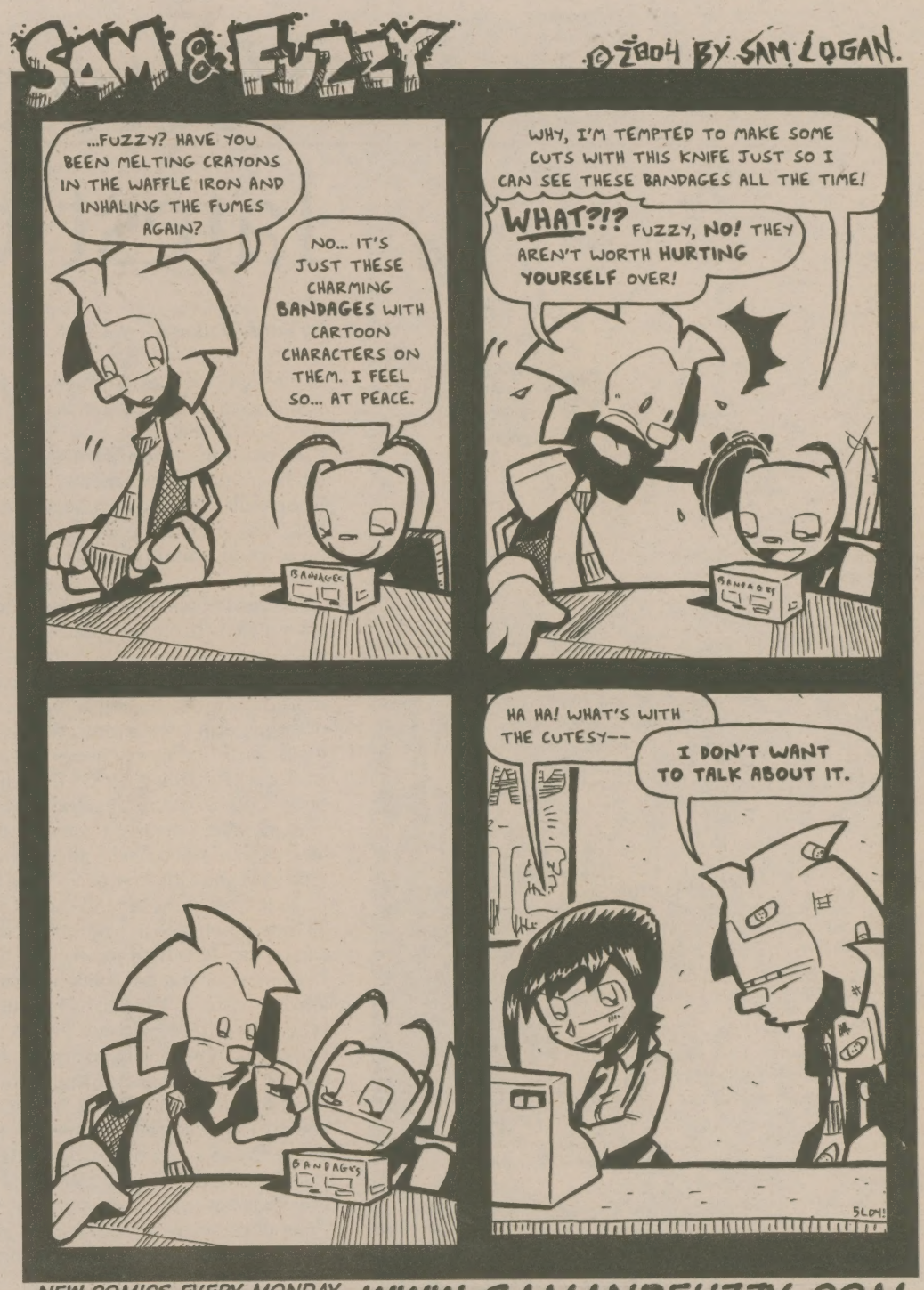
SAM & FUZZY
©2004 BY SAM LOGAN.
...FUZZY? HAVE YOU BEEN MELTING CRAYONS IN THE WAFFLE IRON AND INHALING THE FUMES AGAIN?
NO... IT'S JUST THESE CHARMING BANDAGES WITH CARTOON CHARACTERS ON THEM. I FEEL SO... AT PEACE.
BANDAGES
WHY, I'M TEMPTED TO MAKE SOME CUTS WITH THIS KNIFE JUST SO I CAN SEE THESE BANDAGES ALL THE TIME!
WHAT?!? FUZZY, NO! THEY AREN'T WORTH HURTING YOURSELF OVER!
BANDAGES
HA HA! WHAT'S WITH THE CUTESY--
I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
BANDAGES
SLOM!
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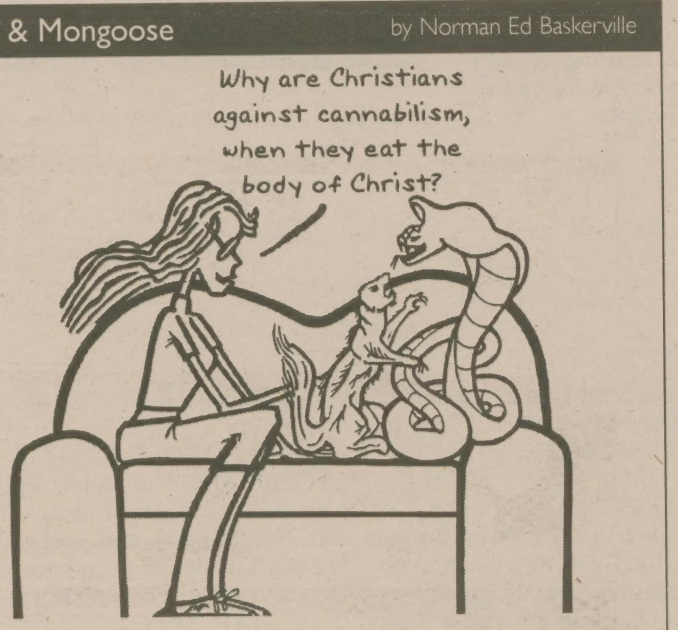
Lady & Mongoose

by Norman Ed Baskerville


Why are Christians against cannabilism, when they eat the body of Christ?
Sometimes Cobra teeth tear up my rectal membrane.

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NOAM CHOMSKY
... and his dog Predicate!
by Jeffrey Weston
OUCH!
Those nasty neighbourhood kids pulled my tail!
This looks like a case of the chickens coming home to roost.
Chickens? What the hell are you talking about?
They probably did it because you bark at them all the time.
I do that because I've been trying to protect our property and our home!
That doesn't matter, they're responding to your oppression.
Is there anything that happens to me that's not my fault then?
Uhh..
I'll get back to you on that.